

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): An incubator for accommodating and holding, at a predetermined constant temperature, a dry analysis element spotted with a sample, the incubator comprising: first and second blocks, at least one of which is movable towards and away from the other, an upper block and a lower block for sandwiching therebetween the dry analysis element;

wherein both of the upper and lower blocks are movable toward and away from each other,

and wherein a heater is provided only for the lower block and the temperature of the heater is adjusted,

in at least one of the blocks, wherein the first and the second blocks upper block and the lower block are brought into contact with each other, for preheating the blocks and the upper block is preheated by heat transferred from the lower block before introducing the dry analysis element therebetween, and

wherein the dry analysis element is accommodated between the upper block and the lower block, the dry analysis element is sandwiched between the upper block and the lower block and heated by heat from both of the upper block and the lower block.

2-3. (canceled).

4. (currently amended): An incubator according to ~~claim 2~~claim 1, wherein the dry analysis element is an electrolytic dry analysis element used for measuring the ion activity in a sample, and potential measuring probes are provided at the one block which is movable towards and away from the other of the upper and lower blocks.

5. (canceled).

6. (currently amended): An incubator according to ~~claim 2~~claim 1, further comprising a cover made of a metal material which covers the upper block, wherein the cover has a heat insulator placed at a part that contacts the upper block.

7. (canceled).

8. (original): An incubator according to claim 4, further comprising a cover made of a metal material which covers the upper block, wherein the cover has a heat insulator placed at a part that contacts the upper block.

9. (canceled).

10. (original): An incubator according to claim 6, wherein the heat insulator of the cover is provided with a recess.

11. (canceled).

12. (original): An incubator according to claim 8, wherein the heat insulator of the cover is provided with a recess.

13. (original): An incubator according to claim 1, wherein the preheating time is changed according to the environmental temperature.